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"Basketball in Indiana may owe its birth to spontaneous combustion or 'Pete' Vaughan may have started it all."

"PETE" VAUGHAN



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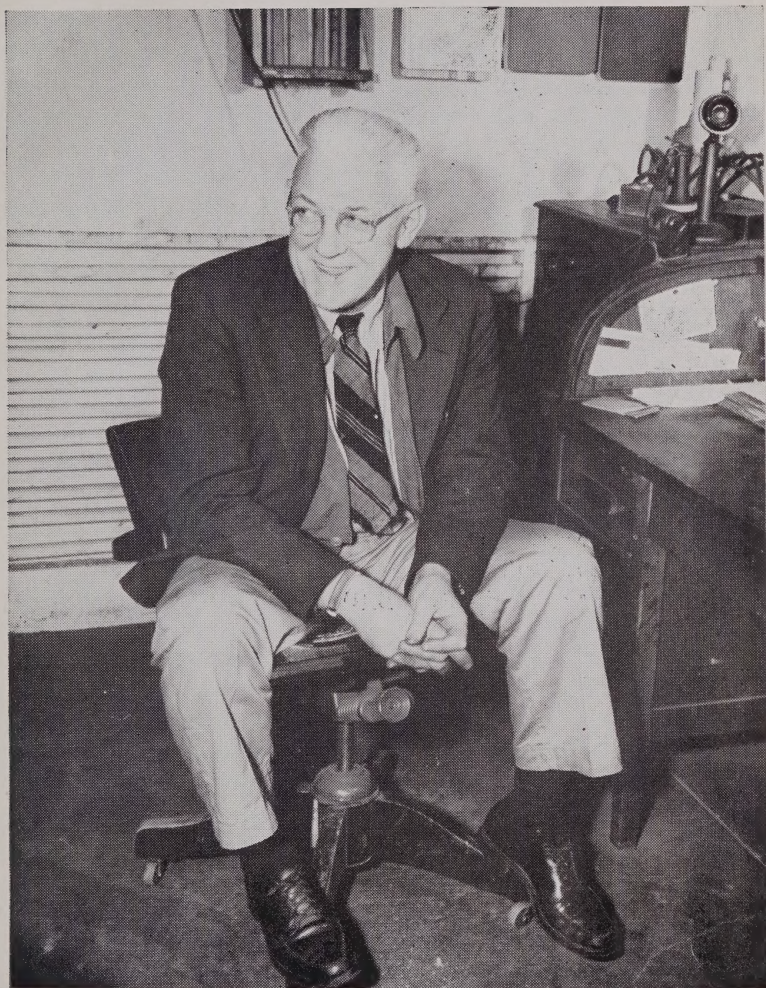
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PETE VAUGHAN AS HE IS TODAY

It seems basketball got its start in Indiana at Crawfordsville late in the last century by the simple process of spontaneous combustion.

At least let's string along with that theory, especially after prodding Robert Edward "Pete" Vaughan, Wabash's athletic director, into the admission that the game "o o o was played long before my time."

Since Vaughan is only 58, this still leaves plenty of room for argument. By this time, however, consensus has it that the sport did have its Hoosier baptism during the Christian era despite some contention that the Mound Builders introduced a strikingly similar game around Anderson a few thousand years ago, with losers getting burial honors in the hills.

Without doubt, Vaughan was one of the pioneers of Hoosier basketball, Crawfordsville its cradle and Wabash College its proving ground. But basketball, strangely enough, was and is Pete's second love.

For 27 years, 1919 to 1945, Peter Vaughan coached Wabash football teams and there lies his heart. Last year he relinquished his duties as head coach to Glenn Harmeson after waging an unsuccessful battle with stomach ulcers since 1938.

"I'd still be coaching football," Vaughan confided, "if it wasn't for those blamed ulcers. But last time I was at Mayo's they said if I didn't lay off they'd have to give me a goat's stomach."

Vaughan chuckles when he speaks of the beginnings of basketball as he found it. He and Ward "Piggy" Lambert, who later wangled a job as Purdue's head basketball coach, were teammates on the Crawfordsville high school teams of 1904-5-6. Vaughan, a year behind Piggy," was also on Crawfordsville's 1907 aggregation.

They played (and beat) Yale, Columbia, Minnesota, Syracuse and many another touring college quintets in the old Crawfordsville YMCA gymnasium.

In 1906 there was a four-team league operating in Crawfordsville which consisted of Wabash College, the high school, the YMCA and a Business College five. Wabash in that year won what was tantamount to the national basketball title. Wabash also in 1906, was beaten twice in that dinky four-team Crawfordsville league, and each time it was by the high school where Vaughan and Lambert operated!

Ralph Jones, now grid coach at Lake Forest College, mentored those undefeated Crawfordsville high school teams when Vaughan was in school. Jones later moved on to coaching jobs at Wabash, Purdue, Illinois, and even had a fling at the professional game in Chicago where he, along with Clark Shaughnessy, fathered the famous "T" formation while with the Bears.

It was Jones, too, who was responsible for nicknaming Pete. Strange as it now may seem, Vaughan was known as "Red," the pseudonym stemming from the fact Vaughan's Irish locks—now a pure white—were red. Given frequent examples of Vaughan's hot-headedness, Jones called him "PDQ," a somewhat incongruous handle that, through a few weeks' evolutionary process, was shortened to Pete.

In addition to Piggy and Pete, the Athenian five of those days had Stoney Yount, later a DuPont chemist of note; Justin (Dud) Maloney, Binford (Doggie) Miller, now running a Crawfordsville printing establishment; Perry Stump, and Irvin (Doc) Garver, both of Crawfordsville, and Lambert's brother "Skeet." There were others, of course.

Earlier attempts at basketball in Crawfordsville—or anywhere else, for that matter—were nurtured by the Y.M.C.A.; in fact, the game really was a satellite to classes in tumbling.

"If you wanted to play any of that new-fangled basketball," Pete said, "you had to sign up for the tumbling classes."

"And the bar exercises really developed your body," Pete explained. "Maybe they need more of that today. When this war came along and gymnastic exercises were pushed onto the kids it was surprising to see how they flopped around. No coordination at all!"



Pete Vaughan's first Wabash football team—the Little Giants of 1919—was the start of a 27-year coaching record which was compiled solely at Crawfordsville. Included on this team were Raymond (Gaumy) Neal, now athletic director at DePauw; Frank Cash, principal of East Chicago High School, and Fuzzy Ott, who for years has been connected with Eli Lilly in Indianapolis. J. R. Townsend, prominent Indianapolis insurance executive, was the Wabash athletic director in 1919. Left to right (front row), Weber, QB; Norman, E; Hunt, HB; Bradley, C; Letsinger, HB; Jones, G; Nuremberger, QB; Grator, E; (middle row), Burns, HB; Thompson, HB; Huffine, QB; Nabor, HB; Johnson, G; Kircheval, C; Cash, G; Ott, T; S. Etter, E; Kneel, FB, and Heald, HB; (back row), Athletic Director Townsend; Mitchell, QB; Harding, E; Ehler, C; Stasand, E; P. Etter, E; Neal, T; Lane, T; Student Manager Abson, and Vaughan.

Vaughan remembered the old Turnverein gymnasts of Indianapolis and the Y.M.C.A. classes and the exhibitions and contests that were given. And he thought about the chest and arm muscles such struggling built on a man, too.

"Basketball players today," he ventured, "aren't developed above the waist. They're all legs—no chests or arms—just legs. Of course," Pete added, grinning, "they play better basketball today!"

In Vaughan's high school days the game of basketball had begun to crop up in other Hoosier prep centers. Oakwood of West Lafayette had a team, Shortridge and Manual of Indianapolis were giving it a fling and Muncie was onside in the Vaughan hardwood reminiscing.

"But mostly," Pete said, "we played colleges, semi-pros, YMCAs and independents. And in those days everybody had a different set of rules to go by. It wasn't until about 1914 that they began to get organized along national lines. When we played, the rules—such as they were—consisted of what was agreeable to the contestants."

This system, brother, left a lot of leeway.

They played in dingy, ill-lighted halls, where posts supporting the roof were natural obstacles. Often teams were subjected to the evil slipperiness of a chalked floor where, only the night previous, roller polo teams had skirmished.

From 1907 until 1919, when Wabash "signed" him on as head football and basketball coach (he actually grew into the job), Vaughan busied brawn and brain in various ways, and at several schools.

He played two years at Notre Dame, then transferred to Princeton where he got in another season after waiting out his one-year ineligibility because of the change.

At Notre Dame, Pete hammered away at fullback, helping the Irish (and they WERE Irish then) to their 1909 title as

Western Champions. With the Tigers, Vaughan handled the fullback slot and played "some tackle."

While in Princeton, Pete often farmed out as a "ringer" (using an alias), playing pro basketball in Eastern towns where he picked up as much as 50 to 75 potatoes a game. This device, not to be condoned under amateur's skirts, is somewhat the reverse of today's tactics in our larger mental institutions where the athlete is paid on the premises, the lucre being disguised under sundry dodges such as student aid, athletic scholarships and cold hard cash.

His father had hankered for Pete to pursue an engineering career. But Pete loved football and the twig was bent as he proved himself on the playing field at South Bend and Princeton.

Purdue, in 1912, received Vaughan as its head basketball coach and line coach under J. E. (Keckie) Moll. Pete was with the Boilermakers until the fall of '15 when he answered Andy Smith's call for help at California. Vaughan went out as line coach for the Bears, participating in the spring practices of 1916.

Vaughan might have been head coach at California. Two forces intervened which erased that proposition: (1) Pershing was going after Villa and Pete wanted in on it, and (2) Pete's father, who was to die a year later, wanted him home to help out in the Vaughan Bottling Works. He tried both, but missed out on Pershing's column going into Mexico and later wound up a captain of infantry in France.

Although Pete served but a relatively short time at Purdue, the Boilermakers owe "Mr. Wabash" a vote of thanks for the acquisition of Piggy Lambert, the astute, if excitable, gentleman whose deft touch raised Old Jawn to a most enviable position in the basketball world.

Here's the way it works:

Vaughan was giving serious thought in 1915 to Smith's call for help from California. Having made up his mind to accept

the offer, Pete told Piggy, then coaching Lebanon high school cagers, to "come on up to Lafayette." Lambert did.

When Vaughan told Purdue school officials he was heading West, he also conveyed the information that they couldn't do much worse by hiring Lambert on as head basketball coach.

"With the help of two or three Lebanon players on the squad," Pete explained, "who pulled like hell for Piggy, Lambert got the job."

Piggy, as you ought to know, developed the fire-brand type of basketball that made Purdue famous. Lambert teams won or shared 11 Western Conference basketball titles—an all-time record—and rang up 371 victories against 152 losses for a mark that is the envy of every big-time tutor.

Last year Piggy, who was "a better shortstop than a basketball player," relinquished his Purdue post to accept the commissionership of the National Professional Basketball League.

Vaughan, once headed for an engineering degree, hit a detour. He never graduated, and he never built anything—except some of the finest small-college football and basketball teams that the U. S. collegiate system ever has seen.

Wabash in the 1920s knocked 'em dead!

Indiana and Purdue were easy pickin's in those days. Even the Grand Old Man of the Midway—A. A. Stagg—had trouble getting his vaunted Maroons past the slashing Little Giants.

Vaughan's players were masters of the flying tackle and their aim was deadly.

But time ran along quickly, too quickly for the Little Giants.

Amateurism and the late Dr. Hopkins came to Wabash in 1924, or vice versa, if you will. The new Wabash president, no athlete, nevertheless swung a haymaker with devilish ac-



Pete Vaughan, as a member of the undefeated Crawfordsville High School basketball team of 1906, had Ward (Piggy) Lambert for a teammate. Piggy and Pete paired to lead this team to victories over such college quintets as Minnesota, Syracuse, Columbia, Yale and twice defeated Wabash College, '06 national collegiate champs. Ralph Jones, now grid mentor at Lake Forest, was coach. Left to right (front row), Lambert and Yount; (middle row), Maloney, Poston, Miller, Stump and Garver; (back row), Student Manager Herron, Vaughan and Coach Jones.

curacy on the Little Giants' sports. Entrance requirements were stiffened—and the lifeblood of college football was channeled to other streets than those of Crawfordsville.

Hopkins set a pattern for Hutchings at Chicago and, if the boys are not just bleating to hear themselves talk, for today's coaches and athletic officials who are deploring the professionalism in college athletics. It was education without the phys.

About the time the market took its big plunge in '29, Wabash athletic stock came down to earth.

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Still there was Vaughan's magic touch and the Little Giants over the years bobbed up occasionally with an aggregation that shouldn't have been, and they r'ar back and trounce Butler and the rest of the Hoosier entries. But then sometimes even the "little ones" trampled the Little Giants.

Glenn Harmeson, whose first Wabash football team promptly won seven of eight last season, accepted the post only after making sure the school wasn't shelving Pete. It was Pete's own idea to give up the grid job. For some time, during the war years, they'd been looking for assistant coaches to help out. With doctors digging into the Vaughan tummy as much as three times a year, help was needed. There was none.

One day Pete had a novel and startling suggestion.

"Hire a head coach," he said, put in a plug for Harmeson. Frank Sparks gasped a presidential gasp, recovered, okayed the idea, and later stamped his approval on Harmeson, the former Purdue star, who gave us the athletic directorship at Lehigh for his present position.

Pete stopped coaching basketball in 1938, making way first for Herman Burns and later Dale Davis, present mentor.

Last year, after 27 continuous years, Pete quit worrying.

No more coaching football, or basketball, or track.

"Well, not exactly," Vaughan concluded, "I still handle track and the ends in football."

Mr. Wabash was smiling.



